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Adoption of the report of the Committee on the work of its forty-first session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Ayman **Elgammal** (Egypt)

Addendum

Coordination questions: implementation of the Special Initiative for the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

(Item 5 (b))

1. At its 5th meeting, on 12 June 2001, the Committee considered the report of the independent evaluation of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa (UNSIA) (E/AC.51/2001/6) and the comments of the Secretary-General thereon (E/AC.51/2001/7).

2. The report was introduced by the representative of ECA (co-Chair of UNSIA). He stated that in the absence of the review team, ECA was assuming the responsibility for introducing their report. The note by the Secretary-General was introduced by the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries.

Discussion

3. Doubt was raised about the quality and validity of the evaluation report for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it was felt that the duration of two months for the evaluation were inadequate to ensure a detailed analysis to be done. In addition, the questionnaire was considered to be too simple to capture, in full, the information required for a thorough evaluation. Furthermore, it was noted that only six of 53 countries in Africa were visited. Finally, a number of persons whose names appeared

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in the list of persons interviewed clarified that they had had general discussions over lunch on Africa and that these could not be considered as interviews on UNSIA.

4. It was also observed that while the report referred to UNSIA's inability to bring in additional financial resources, it had failed to mention those resources that were actually mobilized through its efforts.

5. In commenting on the note by the Secretary-General, disappointment was expressed that even though the disclaimer contained in the note indicated that the Secretary-General did not necessarily agree with some of the views of the evaluators, no details on this were given. It was also noted that a minority of eight agencies had commented on the evaluation report, as compared to the 17 agencies which provided inputs to the 2000 Progress Report presented to the Committee.

6. Concern was expressed that the progress reports on the implementation of UNSIA submitted annually to the Committee had been very positive as compared to the evaluation report, especially since the findings and main recommendation of the latter had been endorsed by seven of the eight agencies that had commented on the report.

7. Views were expressed that endorsed the main recommendation of the evaluation report — that UNSIA be brought to a close. However, less support was expressed for the "dialogue framework" which was recommended to replace it. Doubts were expressed on whether ECA was best placed to assume the role recommended by the report, and the view was expressed that what is required now in addressing African development is action rather than dialogue.

8. The view was expressed that bringing UNSIA to a closure at this point would be premature, in the light of the final review of UN-NADAF scheduled for 2002. The point was made that the final review of UN-NADAF will provide an opportunity for a holistic approach to the evaluation of all initiatives on Africa, and for consensus on a comprehensive framework based on African ownership and leadership.

9. The view was expressed that the information contained in the evaluation of UNSIA, in particular in paragraph 57 of the evaluation report and in the penultimate paragraph of the note by the Secretary-General, made it clear that the United Nations Secretariat, as well as the agencies involved, had a role in obstructing the progress of UNSIA.

Conclusion and recommendation

10. The Committee requested the Secretary-General that a more detailed examination be conducted of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, in the context of the final evaluation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa, and be submitted to it for consideration at its forty-second session.

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Addendum

Coordination questions: draft system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 2002-2005

(Item 5 (c))

Proposed system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 2002-2005

1. At its 4th meeting, on 12 June 2001, the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 2002-2005 (E/CN.6/2001/4), the letter dated 24 May 2001 from the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women to the Chairperson of the Committee (E/AC.51/2001/8) and its annexes, resolution 45/3 on the proposed plan and the comments by some Member States of the Commission on the Status of Women on the proposed plan.

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the report and responded to questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the item.

Discussion

3. It was acknowledged that the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed plan had been fully discussed by Member States at the forty-fifth session of the

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Commission on the Status of Women and at its resumed forty-fifth session, in May 2001.

4. The view was expressed that it is important to eradicate trafficking in women and girls and work towards eliminating traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women.

5. It was further expressed that the document had been thoroughly studied, and in order for it to be a fruitful one it should have included measures adopted by the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, held in June 2000, at which the Assembly had encouraged the regional commissions to develop a database system to include programmes and projects of all the organizations of the United Nations system as a further means of evaluating the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

6. The view was expressed that information on programmes and activities carried out to implement the Beijing Platform for Action was not well known and that there should be greater dissemination of information in this regard.

Conclusion and recommendation

7. The Committee took note of the report by the Secretary-General on the proposed system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 2002-2005 (E/CN.6/2001/4), and of the letter dated 24 May 2001 from the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women to the Chairperson of the Committee (E/AC.51/2001/8).

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Rapporteur: Mr. Ayman M. **Elgammal** (Egypt)

Addendum

Report(s) of the Joint Inspection Unit
(Item 6)

The use of consultants in the United Nations

1. At its 9th meeting, on 15 June 2001, the Committee considered the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled "The use of consultants in the United Nations" (A/55/59) and the comments of the Secretary-General thereon (A/55/59/Add.1). The report of the Joint Inspection Unit was introduced by Inspector Armando Duque González.

Discussion

2. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit was overwhelmingly appreciated. Its contents provided a rigorous analysis of an important subject which had attracted the attention of Member States over many years and contained constructive and action-oriented recommendations. The view was expressed that it was a good example of how JIU reports should be modelled.

3. Concern was expressed over what was perceived as the dissuasive underlying tone of some of the comments of the Secretary-General.

4. The possibility of the excessive and duplicative use of consultants remained a major concern of Member States, as was the unbalanced geographical distribution in the selection of consultants. Support was expressed for the recommendations aimed at ensuring that pertinent information was made available to programme managers

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so as to avoid the use of consultants when expertise was available within the Secretariat and to avoid duplicative activities. It was noted that the Office of Human Resources Management was making progress in the development of the skills inventory project and the hope was expressed that it would be completed as soon as possible. Concern was expressed, however, over the confusing and even contradictory terms of paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of the Secretary-General's comments related to the need for an electronic information system covering the substantive programmes of the United Nations, as a means to avoid duplicative activities.

5. Considerable importance was attached to the need to improve the geographical distribution and the establishment of appropriate norms to that end, as well as to the full and transparent reporting to pertinent legislative and oversight bodies. It was also stressed that the Committee should ensure that there was adequate follow-up.

6. The view was also expressed that an enforced or rigid system for the geographical distribution of consultancies should not be established.

7. Emphasis should also be given by the Secretariat to ensuring an improved gender distribution in the use of consultants.

8. The view was expressed that the policy of personnel reduction encouraged the excessive use of consultants from the countries hosting United Nations headquarters or offices. Concern was expressed with regard to the inability of the current monitoring systems to detect the continuous use of a limited number of consultants, in contradiction to the current rules.

9. It was suggested that in order to improve the use of resources and to avoid duplication of efforts, the use of comprehensive reports should be encouraged.

10. Concern was expressed that annex 1 to the report was not consistent with the provisions of paragraph 4 of section IX of General Assembly resolution 53/221 of 7 April 1999, in which the Assembly had requested that in the submission of reports containing lists of staff, the established practice of showing the representation of staff according to major geographical groupings should be discontinued and that countries should be listed in alphabetical order, and in that regard views were expressed that the Secretary-General should ensure that future reports of the Joint Inspection Unit were consistent with that resolution.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. The Committee welcomed the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the use of consultants in the United Nations and expressed its appreciation to the Unit for its analysis of the issue and its concrete recommendations.

12. The Committee expressed disappointment over the lack of progress in establishing mechanisms to ensure avoidance of duplication of activities and in developing norms aimed at attracting consultants on a wide geographical basis.

13. The Committee noted the lack of information on the gender perspective in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit.

14. The Committee considered recommendation 5 and requested the Secretary-General to study different methodologies which might be used to correct the geographical imbalance in hiring consultants and to report to it on

workable options to enable Member States to make an informed choice among alternative systems at its forty-second session.

15. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 and 10 of the Joint Inspection Unit and to request the Joint Inspection Unit to review the progress made in the implementation of the approved recommendations contained in its report.